Germany

**Year of EU entry: Founding member (1952)**

**Capital city: Berlin**

**Total area: 356 854 km²**

**Population: 82 million**

**Currency:** **Member of the euro zone since 1999 (€)**

**Schengen area:** **Member of the Schengen area since 1985**

Government: Constitutional republic, Democracy, Parliamentary republic, Federal republic, Multi-party system

Official language: German Language

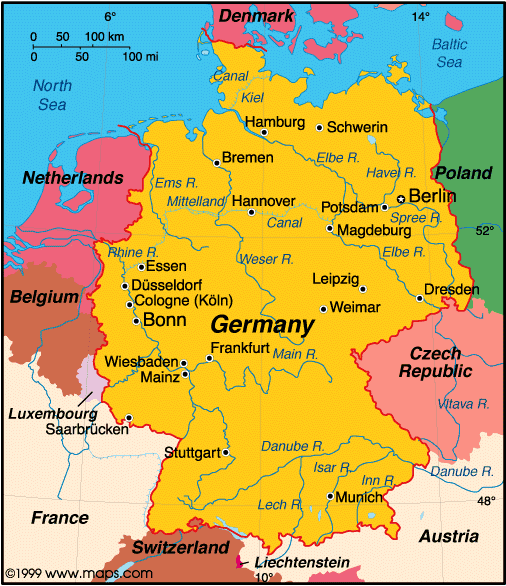
Gross domestic product: 3.601 trillion USD (2011)

**President:** Joachim Gauck (2012)

**Chancellor:** Angela Merkel (2005)

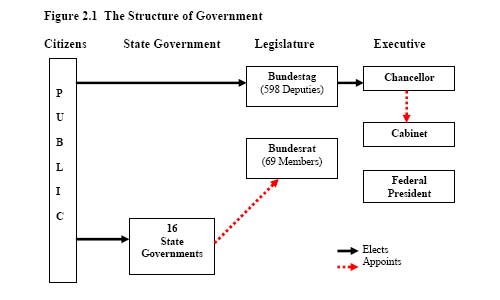
**GEOGRAPHY**

**Germany has the largest population of any EU country and is the most widely spoken first language in the European Union.**

**Its territory stretches from the North Sea and the Baltic in the north to the Alps in the south and is traversed by some of Europe's major rivers such as the Rhine, Danube and Elbe.**

Located in central Europe, Germany is made up of the North German Plain, the Central German Uplands (Mittelgebirge), and the Southern German Highlands. The Bavarian plateau in the southwest averages 1,600 ft (488 m) above sea level, but it reaches 9,721 ft (2,962 m) in the Zugspitze Mountains, the highest point in the country. Germany is about the size of Montana.

POLITICS

**Germany is a federal republic. The lawmakers at the national level are the Bundestag, whose members are elected every four years by popular vote and the Bundesrat, which consists of 69 representatives of the 16 states (Bundesländer).**

[Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) is a [federal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federation) [parliamentary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_system) [republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic), and federal [legislative power](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legislative_power) is vested in the [Bundestag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bundestag_(Germany)) (the [parliament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliament) of Germany) and the [Bundesrat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bundesrat_of_Germany) (the representative body of the [Länder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_of_Germany), Germany's regional states). There is a multi-party system that, since 1949, has been dominated by the [Christian Democratic Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Democratic_Union_(Germany)) (CDU) and the [Social Democratic Party of Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Democratic_Party_of_Germany) (SPD). The [judiciary of Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judiciary_of_Germany) is independent of the executive and the legislature. The political system is laid out in the 1949 [constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution), the [Grundgesetz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basic_Law_for_the_Federal_Republic_of_Germany) (Basic Law), which remained in effect with minor amendments after 1990's [German reunification](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_reunification). The constitution emphasizes the protection of [individual liberty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individual_liberty) in an extensive catalogue of [human rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights_in_Germany) and divides powers both between the federal and state levels and between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

**HISTORY**

**After the Second World War, Germany was divided into the democratic West and the Communist East (German Democratic Republic). The Berlin Wall became the symbol of this division. It fell in 1989 and Germany was reunited a year later.**

The Celts are believed to have been the first inhabitants of Germany. They were followed by German tribes at the end of the 2nd century B.C. German invasions destroyed the declining Roman Empire in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. One of the tribes, the Franks, attained supremacy in western Europe under Charlemagne, who was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800. By the Treaty of Verdun (843), Charlemagne's lands east of the Rhine were ceded to the German Prince Louis. Additional territory acquired by the Treaty of Mersen (870) gave Germany approximately the area it maintained throughout the Middle Ages. For several centuries after Otto the Great was crowned king in 936, German rulers were also usually heads of the Holy Roman Empire.

By the 14th century, the Holy Roman Empire was little more than a loose federation of the German princes who elected the Holy Roman Emperor. In 1438, Albert of Hapsburg became emperor, and for the next several centuries the Hapsburg line ruled the Holy Roman Empire until its decline in 1806. Relations between state and church were changed by the Reformation, which began with Martin Luther's 95 theses, and came to a head in 1547, when Charles V scattered the forces of the Protestant League at Mühlberg. The Counter-Reformation followed. A dispute over the succession to the Bohemian throne brought on the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), which devastated Germany and left the empire divided into hundreds of small principalities virtually independent of the emperor.

**ECONOMY**

**Germany is the world's third largest economy, producing automobiles, precision engineering products, electronic and communications equipment, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, and much more besides. Its companies have invested heavily in the central and east European countries which joined the EU in 2004.**

Germany is the largest national economy in Europe, the fourth-largest by nominal GDP in the world, and fifth by GDP (PPP) in 2008. Since the age of industrialization and beyond, the industrial capitalism, the country has been a driver, innovator, and beneficiary of an ever more globalised economy. Germany is the world's second largest exporter with $1.408 trillion exported in 2011 (Euro zone countries are included).Exports account for more than one-third of national output.

Germany is relatively poor in raw materials. Only lignite and potash salt are available in economically significant quantities. Power plants burning lignite are one of the main sources of electricity in Germany. Oil, natural gas and other resources are, for the most part, imported from other countries. Germany imports about two thirds of its energy.

The service sector contributes around 70% of the total GDP, industry 29.1%, and agriculture 0.9%. Most of the country's products are in engineering, especially in automobiles, machinery, metals, and chemical goods. Germany is the leading producer of wind turbines and solar power technology in the world. The largest annual international trade fairs and congresses are held in several German cities such as Hanover, Frankfurt, and Berlin. Combination of service-oriented manufacturing, spending, links between industry and academia, international cooperation and SME contribute to the overall competitiveness of the economy of Germany.

Of the world's 500 largest stock market listed companies measured by revenue, the Fortune Global 500, 37 are headquartered in Germany. In 2010 the ten largest were Volkswagen, Allianz, E.ON, Daimler, Siemens, Metro, Deutsche Telekom, Munich Re, BASF, and BMW. Other large German companies include: Robert Bosch, ThyssenKrupp, and MAN (diversified industrials); Bayer and Merck (pharmaceuticals); Adidas and Puma (clothing and footwear); Commerzbank and Deutsche Bank (banking and finance); Aldi, Lidl and Edeka (retail); SAP (computer software); Infineon (semiconductors); Henkel (household and personal consumer products); Deutsche Post (logistics); and Hugo Boss (luxury goods). Well-known global brands are Mercedes Benz, BMW, Adidas, Audi, Porsche, Volkswagen, Bayer, BASF, Bosch, Siemens, Lufthansa, SAP and Nivea.

Between 1991 and 2010, 40,301 mergers and acquisitions with an involvement of German firms with a total known value of 2,422 bil. EUR have been announced. The largest transactions since 1991 are: the acquisition of Mannesmann by Vodafone for 204.8 bil. EUR in 1999, the merger of Daimler-Benz with Chrysler to form DaimlerChrysler in 1998 valued at 36.3 bil.

**FAMOUS GERMAN PEOPLE**

**As birthplace of Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms and Richard Wagner, among others, Germany's gift to European classical music is important. In thought and word, Germany’s huge heritage includes the works of Luther, Goethe, Schiller, Nietzsche, Kant, Brecht and Thomas Mann.**

FOOD AND DRINK

**Drink: Germany is the second largest producer of hops in the world and the country is known for its quality beers. Wine is produced in the Moselle and Rhine valleys.**

When was registered in 1956, Riegele at first was selling beer under the trademark. When Spezi is bottled by other breweries, it usually runs under the official title "Cola-Mix". In Bavarian dialect it is also called Gwasch.

In most of Germany and Austria, Spezi is a generic term for a mixture of cola and orange soda. Riegele registered the trademark and tried to monopolise the use of the term, but did not achieve that goal. Most large beverage manufacturers sell similar products, though most of them only in Germany. Examples are Schwip Schwap by PepsiCo or Mezzo Mix by the Coca-Cola Company. Nowadays, these two competitors sell far better than the original Spezi. However, original Spezi, in contrast to its main competitors, is not available in some parts of Germany, particularly in large parts of former East Germany, which is probably one of the reasons for its smaller market share. Like other colas, Spezi contains caffeine; other ingredients include water, sugar, carbonic acid, orange juice and lemon juice.

**Food: Bratwurst (sausage) is still eaten a lot and all kinds of potato dishes are also popular. Sauerkraut (cabbage in vinegar brine) no longer features prominently** **in German cuisine**.

German cuisine has evolved as a national cuisine through centuries of social and political change with variations from region to region. The southern regions of Germany, including Bavaria and neighboring Swabia, share many dishes. Furthermore, across the border in Austria, one will find many similar dishes. However, ingredients and dishes vary by region. Many significant regional dishes have become national, but have proliferated in very different variations across the country presently.

The composer Ludwig Van Beethoven born when Bonn.